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No. 123

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 21, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2084. An act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2084) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. BOND, Mr. GORTON, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BYRD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Janu-

ary 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing a very diverse district. I represent the south side of Chicago, south suburbs, and Cook and Will counties, industrial communities like Joliet, a lot of corn fields and farm towns too.

When one represents such a diverse constituency, cities, suburbs, and country, one learns to listen and listen for those common concerns and common questions that are brought forward, whether by suburbanites or city dwellers or our farm folk.

I find that in the district that I have the privilege of representing in Illinois that the common concerns are pretty simple, that folks want us to work together, they want us to solve our challenges, they want us to find solutions, and they want us to change how Washington works.

As I look back over the last 5 years, I am pleased that we have worked to find those solutions, solutions to the challenges today of balancing the budget, of cutting taxes, and reforming our welfare system and we did change how Washington works.

As I look back over the last 5 years, I am proud to say that we balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years, 3 years ago. We are now working on our third balanced budget in a row. We did

such a great job that now we have all this extra money of three trillion surplus dollars projected over the next 10 years.

We cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years, and three million Illinois children are going to benefit from the \$500 per child tax credit. We reformed welfare for the first time in a generation.

I am proud to say that in Illinois the welfare roles have been cut in half. In my home county of Grundy, our welfare roles have dropped by 84 percent. We also tamed the tax collector, shifting the burden of proof off the backs of the taxpayer and onto the IRS. Those are fundamental changes, balancing the budget, cutting taxes, reforming our welfare system, and taming the tax collector.

People often say, well, what is next? What other solutions is Congress going to find to the challenges that we face? Our agenda is simple. We want to strengthen our local schools. We want to lower the tax burden and make it fair for working families. We want to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. And we also want to pay down the national debt that was run up over 30 years of deficit spending.

I often hear common questions in the district I represent, whether at a union hall or the VFW or the Chamber of Commerce or a coffee shop or a grain elevator. People often say, when are you folks in Washington going to stop raiding the Social Security Trust Fund?

I am proud to say this Republican Congress is putting a stop to that. In fact, this year we are walling off the Social Security Trust Fund, setting aside a hundred percent of Social Security for the first time in 30 years for Social Security only.

The President says he wants to set aside 62 percent. We believe in a hundred percent of Social Security for Social Security. That means \$200 billion

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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